Claims

1. A method of preparing early season not from concentrate orange juice, comprising the steps of:

harvesting a very early season orange cultivar having juice with early season color of greater intensity than Hamlin orange juice while also exhibiting sensory qualities substantially equivalent to the sensory qualities of Hamlin orange juice, said harvesting step including selecting a cultivar within the Seleta family of cultivars, a Westin cultivar, a Ruby Nucellar cultivar, or a combination of these very early season cultivars;

extracting juice from a volume of said very early season oranges of said harvesting step;

collecting the resulting extracted orange juice as an early season orange juice having a Color Number of at least 33 CN units; and

blending said extracted early season orange juice with another orange juice source in order to provide a not from concentrate orange juice product having a Color Number in excess of 33 CN units.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said harvesting step occurs in October or November in the Northern Hemisphere.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said blending step blends a stored orange juice as the another orange juice source.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said blending step incorporates up to about 80 weight percent of said extracted orange juice.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said collecting step provides early season orange juice having a Color

Number of at least 1 CN greater than Hamlin orange juice harvested at the time of said harvesting step.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said collecting step provides early season orange juice having a Color Number of at least 2 CN greater than Hamlin orange juice harvested at the time of said harvesting step.

7. The method of claim 1,wherein said cultivar within the Seleta family is selected from the group consisting of Seleta Branca, Seleta Coroa-do-Rei, Seleta de Itaborai, Seleta Vermelha, and combinations thereof.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said collecting step provides a juice having a Brix-to-acid ratio (BAR) during the months of October and November which meets or exceeds the Orange Fruit Maturity Standards of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

9. A method of preparing not from concentrate orange juice from oranges, comprising the steps of:

harvesting fruit of a very early season orange cultivar having juice with an early season color which has a Color Number which is at least about 1 CN greater than that of corresponding early season color of juice extracted from Hamlin oranges, while also exhibiting sensory qualities substantially equivalent to the sensory qualities of Hamlin orange juice;

extracting juice from a plurality of the very early season orange cultivar of the harvesting step, said extracting occurring during an extraction time period which is early in the orange growing season;

collecting the juice from the extracting step in order to provide an orange juice source having a Color Number of at least 33 CN units; and

blending said juice from the extracting step with another juice in order to provide a not from concentrate orange juice product having a Color Number in excess of 33 CN units.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said harvesting step occurs in October or November in the Northern Hemisphere.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein said blending step blends a stored orange juice as the another orange juice source.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein said collecting step provides a juice having a Brix-to-acid ratio (BAR) during the months of October and November which meets or exceeds the Orange Fruit Maturity Standards of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein said harvesting step selects a cultivar having an early season color of at least about 2 CN greater than Hamlin orange juice of a corresponding harvest time.

14. A method of preparing not from concentrate orange juice from oranges, comprising the steps of:

harvesting an orange cultivar fruit selected from the group consisting of Westin cultivars, Ruby Nucellar cultivars, Itaborai cultivars, Vermelha cultivars, and combinations thereof;

extracting juice from a volume of said orange cultivar fruit;

collecting the resulting extracted orange juice as an early season orange juice source having a Color Number of at least 33 CN units; and

combining the extracted early season orange juice from said extracting step with another juice in order to provide a not from concentrate orange juice product.

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~~15~~. The method of claim ~~14~~, wherein said combining step provides a not from concentrate orange juice product having a Color Number which is greater than 33 CN units.

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~~16~~. The method of claim ~~14~~, wherein said harvesting step occurs in October or November in the Northern Hemisphere.

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~~17~~. The method of claim ~~14~~, wherein said collecting step provides early season orange juice having a Color Number of at least 1 CN greater than Hamlin orange juice harvested at the time of said harvesting step.

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~~18~~. The method of claim ~~14~~, wherein said collecting step provides early season orange juice having a Color Number of at least 2 CN greater than Hamlin orange juice harvested at the time of said harvesting step.

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~~19~~. The method of claim ~~14~~, wherein said collecting step provides a juice having a Brix-to-acid ratio (BAR) during the months of October and November which meets or exceeds the Orange Fruit Maturity Standards of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

20. A method of preparing not from concentrate orange juice from oranges, comprising the steps of:

harvesting fruit of an orange cultivar which provides juice having early season color which is at least 1 Color Number unit greater than that of juice extracted from Hamlin oranges harvested at the time

of said harvesting step, while also exhibiting sensory qualities substantially equivalent to the sensory qualities of said harvested Hamlin orange cultivars;

extracting juice from the orange cultivar of the harvesting step, said extracting occurring during an extraction time period which is early in the orange harvesting season;

collecting the juice from the extracting step in order to provide a fresh orange juice source; and

blending said fresh orange juice source from the extracting step with another orange juice source in order to provide a not from concentrate orange juice product.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein said blending step provides a product having a Color Number of at least about 35 CN units.

23. The method in accordance with claim 20, wherein said harvesting step selects orange cultivar fruit which provides early season color which has an early season color value which is at least about 2 Color Numbers greater than that of juice extracted from said Hamlin oranges.

24. The method of claim 20, wherein said harvesting step occurs in October or November in the Northern Hemisphere.

25. The method of claim 20, wherein said blending step blends a stored orange juice as the another orange juice source.

26. The method of claim 20, wherein said blending step incorporates up to about 80 weight percent of said extracted orange juice.

27. The method of claim 20, wherein said collecting step provides a juice having a Brix-to-acid ratio (BAR) during the months of October and November which meets or exceeds the Orange Fruit Maturity Standards of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

28. The method in accordance with claim 20, wherein said collecting step provides a juice having a Brix value which meets or exceeds the minimum total solids requirement during the months of October and November of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, and this juice of said collecting step provides a Brix-to-acid ratio (BAR) during the months of October and November which meets or exceeds the Orange Fruit Maturity Standards of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services for BAR during the months of October and November.

29. A method of preparing not from concentrate orange juice from oranges, comprising the steps of:

harvesting fruit of an orange cultivar which provides juice during the months of October and November having a Color Number which is more intense than juice provided by Hamlin oranges during the months of October and November, respectively, while also exhibiting sensory qualities substantially equivalent to the sensory qualities of juice Hamlin orange cultivars harvested during October and November, respectively;

extracting juice from the orange cultivar of the selecting step, said extracting occurring during an extraction time period which is very early in the orange harvesting season;

collecting the juice from the extracting step in order to provide an orange juice source having a Color Number of at least 33 CN units; and

blending said juice from the extracting step with another juice in order to provide an orange juice product having a color value in excess of 33 CN units.

30. The method in accordance with claim 29, wherein said collecting step provides a juice having a Brix-to-acid ratio (BAR) values during the months of October and November which meets or exceed the Orange Fruit Maturity Standards of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

31. The method in accordance with claim 29, wherein said collecting step provides a juice having a Brix value which meets or exceeds the minimum total solids requirement during the months of October and November of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, and this juice of said collecting step provides a Brix-to-acid ratio (BAR) during the months of October and November which meets or exceeds the Orange Fruit Maturity Standards of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services for BAR during the months of October and November.

32. The method of claim 29, wherein said collecting step provides early season orange juice having a Color Number of at least 1 CN greater than Hamlin orange juice harvested at the time of said harvesting step.

33. The method of claim 29, wherein said collecting step provides early season orange juice having a Color Number of at least 2 CN greater than Hamlin orange juice harvested at the time of said harvesting step.

34. The method of claim 29, wherein said blending step provides a product having a Color Number of at least about 35 CN units.

The method in accordance with claim 29, wherein said harvesting step selects orange cultivar fruit which provides early season color which has an early season color value which is at least about 2 Color Numbers greater than that of juice extracted from said Hamlin oranges.

A not from concentrate orange juice prepared in accordance with a process comprising the steps of:

harvesting a very early season orange cultivar having juice with early season color of greater intensity than Hamlin orange juice while also exhibiting sensory qualities substantially equivalent to the sensory qualities of Hamlin orange juice, said harvesting step including selecting a cultivar within the Seleta family of cultivars, a Westin cultivar, a Ruby Nucellar cultivar, or a combination of these very early season cultivars;

extracting juice from a volume of said very early season oranges of said harvesting step;

collecting the resulting extracted orange juice as an early season orange juice having a Color Number of at least 33 CN units; and

blending said extracted early season orange juice with another orange juice source in order to provide a not from concentrate orange juice product having a Color Number in excess of 33 CN units.

The orange juice of claim 36, wherein said very early season orange cultivars are harvested in October.

The orange juice of claim 36, wherein said very early season orange cultivars are harvested in November.

39. The orange juice of claim 36, wherein said extracted early season orange juice comprises up to about 80 weight percent of the not from concentrate juice.

40. The orange juice of claim 36, wherein said extracted early season orange juice has a Color Number which is at least 1 CN greater than Hamlin orange juice.

41. The orange juice of claim 36, wherein said extracted early season orange juice has a Color Number which is at least 2 CN greater than Hamlin orange juice.

42. The orange juice of claim 36, wherein said cultivar within the Seleta family is selected from the group consisting of Seleta Branca, Seleta Coroa-do-Rei, Seleta de Itaborai, Seleta Vermelha, and combinations thereof.

43. The orange juice of claim 36, wherein said cultivar within the Seleta family is selected from the group consisting of Seleta de Itaborai, Seleta Vermelha, and combinations thereof.

44. The orange juice of claim 36, wherein said early season orange juice has a Brix value which meets or exceeds the minimum total solids requirement during the months of October and November of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, and this juice of said collecting step provides a Brix-to-acid ratio (BAR) during the months of October and November which meets or exceeds the Orange Fruit Maturity Standards of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services for BAR during the months of October and November.

45. A not from concentrate orange juice prepared in accordance with a process comprising the steps of:

harvesting fruit of a very early season orange cultivar having juice with an early season color which has a Color Number which is at least about 1 CN greater than that of corresponding early season color of juice extracted from Hamlin oranges, while also exhibiting sensory qualities substantially equivalent to the sensory qualities of Hamlin orange juice;

extracting juice from a plurality of the very early season orange cultivar of the harvesting step, said extracting occurring during an extraction time period which is early in the orange growing season;

collecting the juice from the extracting step in order to provide an orange juice source having a Color Number of at least 33 CN units; and

blending said juice from the extracting step with another juice in order to provide a not from concentrate orange juice product having a Color Number in excess of 33 CN units.

45 ~~46.~~ A not from concentrate orange juice prepared in accordance with a process comprising the steps of:

harvesting an orange cultivar fruit selected from the group consisting of Westin cultivars, Ruby Nucellar cultivars, Itaborai; Vermelha cultivars, and combinations thereof;

extracting juice from a volume of said orange cultivar fruit;

collecting the resulting extracted orange juice as an early season orange juice source having a Color Number of at least 33 CN units; and

combining the extracted early season orange juice from said extracting step with another juice in order to provide a not from concentrate orange juice product.

46 ~~47.~~ A not from concentrate orange juice prepared in accordance with a process comprising the steps of:

harvesting fruit of an orange cultivar which provides juice having early season color which is at least 1 Color Number unit greater than that of juice extracted from Hamlin oranges harvested at the time of said harvesting step, while also exhibiting sensory qualities substantially equivalent to the sensory qualities of said harvested Hamlin orange cultivars;

extracting juice from the orange cultivar of the harvesting step, said extracting occurring during an extraction time period which is early in the orange harvesting season;

collecting the juice from the extracting step in order to provide a fresh orange juice source; and

blending said fresh orange juice source from the extracting step with another orange juice source in order to provide a not from concentrate orange juice product.

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~~48.~~ A not from concentrate orange juice prepared in accordance with a process comprising the steps of:

harvesting fruit of an orange cultivar which provides juice during the months of October and November having a Color number which is more intense than juice provided by Hamlin oranges during the months of October and November, respectively, while also exhibiting sensory qualities substantially equivalent to the sensory qualities of juice Hamlin orange cultivars harvested during October and November, respectively;

extracting juice from the orange cultivar of the selecting step, said extracting occurring during an extraction time period which is very early in the orange harvesting season;

collecting the juice from the extracting step in order to provide an orange juice source having a Color Number of at least 33 CN units; and

blending said juice from the extracting step with another juice in order to provide an orange juice product having a color value in excess of 33 CN units.

~~49~~ 48. A not from concentrate orange juice composition comprising a blend of:

at least about 1 percent by weight of a stored orange juice, based upon the total weight of the composition;

up to about 99 weight percent of a very early season fresh orange juice, based upon the total weight of the composition; and

said very early season fresh orange juice is extracted from said early season round orange cultivars selected from the group consisting of a cultivar within the Seleta family of cultivars, a Westin cultivar, a Ruby Nucellar cultivar, or a combination of these early season cultivars.

~~50~~ 49. The composition of claim ~~49~~ 48, wherein said stored juice comprises at least about 10 percent by weight, and said very early season fresh juice comprises up to about 90 percent by weight.

~~51~~ 50. The composition of claim ~~49~~ 48, wherein said stored juice comprises at least about 20 percent by weight, and said very early season fresh juice comprises up to about 80 percent by weight.

~~52~~ 51. A not from concentrate orange juice composition comprising a blend of:

at least about 1 percent by weight of a stored orange juice, based upon the total weight of the composition;

up to about 99 weight percent of a very early season fresh orange juice, based upon the total weight of the composition; and

said very early season fresh orange juice is extracted from said early season round orange cultivars selected from the group consisting of a Westin cultivar, a Ruby Nucellar cultivar, a Seleta Itaborai cultivar, a Seleta Vermelha cultivar, or a combination of these early season cultivars.

The composition of claim 52, wherein said stored juice comprises at least about 10 percent by weight, and said very early season fresh juice comprises up to about 90 percent by weight.

The composition of claim 52, wherein said stored juice comprises at least about 20 percent by weight, and said very early season fresh juice comprises up to about 80 percent by weight.

A not from concentrate orange juice composition comprising a blend of:

at least about 1 percent by weight of a stored orange juice, based upon the total weight of the composition;

up to about 99 weight percent of a very early season fresh orange juice, based upon the total weight of the composition; and

said very early season fresh orange juice is extracted from said early season round orange cultivars selected from the group consisting of a Seleta Itaborai cultivar, a Seleta Vermelha cultivar, or a combination of these early season cultivars.

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56. A not from concentrate orange juice composition comprising a blend of:

at least about 1 percent by weight of a stored orange juice, based upon the total weight of the composition;

up to about 99 weight percent of a very early season fresh orange juice, based upon the total weight of the composition; and

said very early season fresh orange juice is extracted from said early season round orange cultivars selected from the group consisting of a cultivar within the Seleta family of cultivars, or a combination of these early season cultivars.